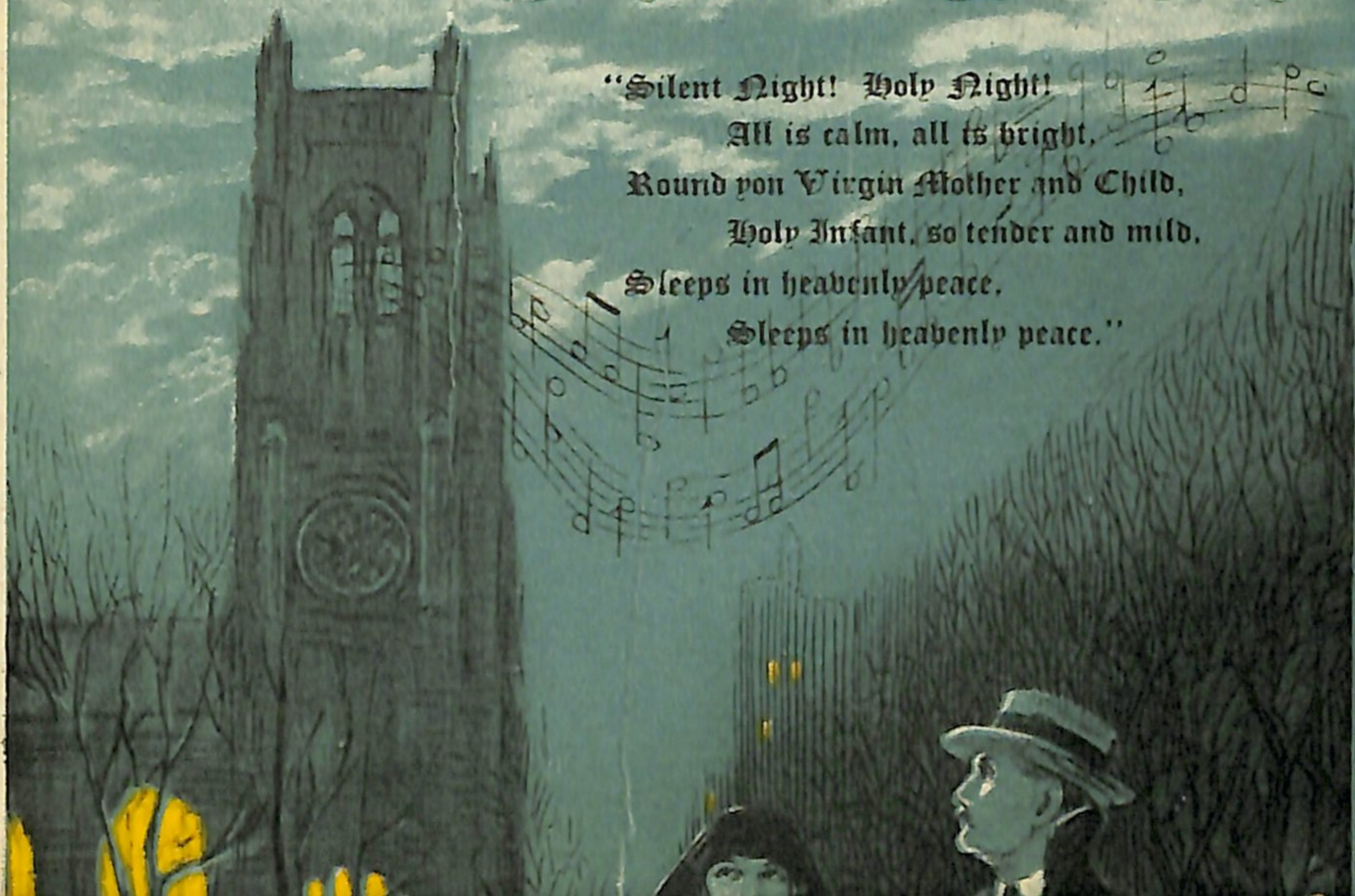
The Book that Failed

Silent night-Holy night



THE BROOK THAT FAILED.

I Kings. 17:7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up.

INTRO. A tired man by a brook that had run dry, feeling his courage and faith fail ~~him~~ with the stream which had supplied him for a season-this thepicture of our text and might represent any one of us.

It happened at Cherith, this special instance. Our geographers do not know where Cherith is or was. We know that the man in thepicture was Elijah. But many a plain man knows where his own Cherith is, and the man in the picture may as well be- you or I.

I. The brook that went dry! Need I name it?
There is business, for instance- any sort of business or profession.
The young man facing his future sees himself camped by the running stream of prosperity, fortune shining in his eye!
But how painfully different is the experience of older men. 95% of all merchants fail, sooner or later. Just another way of saying that 95 out of every 100 business men hang, dry-lipped and dry-eyed and dry-souled over the failing stream of their enterprise.
Some day the physician sees his practice ~~go into other offices than his own~~ diminishing, the lawyer sees his clients enter other offices, the teacher sees younger ones secure the schools, or the preacher learns that a hoary head may be a crown of glory but get no hearing a vacant pulpit.

II. Then, there is health,- that brook whose steady flow we take for granted.
How we all, with a few exceptions, expect to go on keeping well.
But some day the rythm disappears from our pulses and the vitality runs low.
Oh, the tragedy of the first gray hair! To realize that we cannot run up stairs as rapidly as we once could, that certain cares that once stimulated us now sour us- oh, cant you see what it is? It is the failing brook, the brook that is drying up.

III. Then, there is Friendship. One may get on with a meager income or lose his health and still live to see a ripe old age, but without friends one cannot life at all. And many a man has turned from the bare blistered bottoms of ~~friendship~~ business failure ~~and~~ †loss ~~loss~~ to the cool springs of friendship, confident that they must run on forever. Yet, even these streams dry up, and alas, too often, they fail us when we most need them. A friend in need is a friend, indeed.

My tribute to friendship- when the brook of life failed us a few weeks ago, the comforting influence/ and kindly /administration/ of friends kept me from bein utterly broken and crushed. Had my Cherith of Friendshi p failed me then, God knows what would have happened!

San Francisco after Earthquake!

IV. But I have not named the brooks whose failure dries up the soul.

When a woman discovers she can no longer trust her own hunband or child. When a child in the home open s the door to the closet containing the family skeleton When some saint of many yrs declares he is no longer sure of God!

Oh, the dried-up streams of love and faith that leave the soul as bleached and parched as was the hot river-be bed of Cherith when its waters failed.

V. But one cannot lose without having first possessed!

Is not every loss we mourn and complain of a confession that we had something to lose? We cannot, of course, live long on past experiences, any more than we can on eaten dinners and spent dollars.

But before we leave our dried-up Cheriths, let us remember what once they were to us, how their cool sparkling streams quenched our thirst and cooled our over-heated selves.

It is not merely better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all- but it is a 1000 times better, yea, 10,000 times better!

When Stevenson was broken in health, fighting a losing game with approaching death he declared," I know what true happiness is for I have done good work".

VI. But when Cherith went dry, that was not the end of the story. Elijah prpbably thot it was. He probably thot that God had forsaken him. When your brroks go dry, do you think that God is dead, or absent or indifferent? Are your dried up Cheriths proofs to you of any unkindness on God's part?

A man's little boy lay dying. The doctors held out no hope whatever. The mother and father, in despair smote heaven with their prayers. Many friends joined them in an appeal that was almost a defiance of fate. And the boy recovered at length. But when that boy became grown he broke the hearts of his mother and father! Which, then, shall we say was the providence of God- the sickness or the recovery? The threatened denial or the apparent answer to prayer?

The Monday night of Feb.20th. The long night of wrestling with God.

"It is easy enough to be pleasant,
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while
Is the man who can smile"-

who can believe in the good nes of God and call Him kind and trust the final issue of all bitter processes-

"When everything goes dead wrong!"

VI. I said that when Cherith went dry that was not the end of the story. It was but the preparation of Elijah for Zarephath, with its bountiful supply of meal and oil, with its high fellowship and its incredidable honor to a prophet.

Somehow, tho I do not understand it, and tho I shrink to experience them- our dried-up Cheriths, our hurts and losses, our sicknesses and deaths are ministers of the Good God who by them prepares us for Zarephath, for higher living and more efficient service.

Among the members of a Korean Church when the Japanese were persecuting bitterly, was a student who had just returned from Waseda University. THey threw this student into prison and placed him in solitary confinement. And oh how he did chafe under the restraint that kept him from telling even his fellow prisoners about the wonderful Christ! Then the student was unexpectedly banished to a neighboring island where there were no Xns. Sometime afterward he spoke of it as follows:"Just think! I had been long-for a chance to tell about Jesus to those who did not know him. Then God sent me off to an unevangelized island, where there was plenty of work to do for Him, and Japan paid my f fare!"